

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 306712

STADIS/////////  
EA ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, SN

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY EVALUATION PLAN

1. THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY EVALUATION PLAN FOR SINGAPORE HAS BEEN COMPLETED, CLEARED WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT AND APPROVED BY THE BUREAU OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (HA). PART A AND THE INTRODUCTION WILL BE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS AS PART OF THE CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION DOCUMENT (CPD), WHILE PART B WILL REMAIN CLASSIFIED. THE TEXT OF PART A APPEARS BELOW. PART B WILL FOLLOW SEPTEL. CURRENT PLANS ARE FOR PART B TO BE REVIEWED BY THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (THE CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE) AT A LATER DATE. PART A WAS SUPPOSED TO BE TYPED IN THE SPECIAL FORMAT FOR THE CPD AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY BY DECEMBER 15 IN ORDER TO MEET A TIGHT SCHEDULE FOR FINAL SEVENTH FLOOR REVIEW AND PRINTING, BUT A NUMBER OF REPORTS ARE RUNNING LATE. THE TEXT IS BASED ON OR INCORPORATES MAJOR CONFIDENTIAL

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ELEMENTS FROM EMBASSY'S PREVIOUS COMMENTS AND REPORTS.

2. THE TEXT OF PART A IS BEING TRANSMITTED FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND COMMENT BUT NOT FOR DETAILED CLEARANCE OR ALTERATION GIVEN THE CONSTRAINTS UNDER WHICH WE ARE OPERATING. IF POSTS FIND MAJOR FACTUAL ERRORS OR BELIEVE

SEVERE DAMAGE WILL RESULT TO US INTERESTS FROM SPECIFIC STATEMENTS, WE SHOULD BE INFORMED BY IMMEDIATE TELEGRAM WITH EA ONLY CAPTIONS. INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE GIVEN LATER

CONCERNING ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF HOST GOVERNMENTS.  
YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT CHANGES WILL BE EXTREMELY  
DIFFICULT TO EFFECT AT THIS ADVANCED STAGE FOLLOWING  
"FINAL" CLEARANCES. TEXT FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT.

HUMAN RIGHTS EVALUATION PLAN - SINGAPORE

INTRODUCTION

SINGAPORE IS GOVERNED UNDER A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM  
MODELED GENERALLY ALONG BRITISH LINES. MEMBERS OF PARLIA-  
MENT ARE ELECTED TO MAXIMUM FIVE-YEAR TERMS ON THE BASIS  
OF UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE. THE PEOPLES ACTION PARTY  
(PAP) COMPLETELY DOMINATES THE PARLIAMENT HAVING CARRIED  
ALL 69 SEATS IN THE 1976 ELECTION. THE GOVERNMENT ENJOYS  
BROAD POPULAR SUPPORT; ITS CIVIL SERVICE IS EFFICIENT AND  
HONEST, AND ITS LEADERSHIP FREE FROM CORRUPTION. IN ECO-  
NOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS, ITS RECORD OF ENHANCING THE  
MATERIAL WELL-BEING OF ALL ITS CITIZENS IS EXCELLENT.

A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY WITH A DOMINANT MAJORITY OF  
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CHINESE, BUT HAVING BOTH MALAY AND INDIAN MINORITIES,  
SINGAPORE HAS EXPERIENCED COMMUNAL TENSION IN ITS PAST.  
IT HAS ALSO BEEN SUBJECTED TO ACTS OF TERRORISM BY  
ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA.

THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE CITES BOTH THE THREAT OF  
INSURGENCY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED COMMUNAL CON-  
FLICT AS JUSTIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY LEGISLATION WHICH  
MAKES LEGAL THE ARREST AND DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL OF  
PERSONS SUSPECTED OF SUBVERSIVE OR OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT  
THREATEN GENERAL CIVIC ORDER.

A. CONDITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SINGAPORE

1. RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON, INCLUDING  
FREEDOM FROM:

A. TORTURE: TORTURE IS NOT OFFICIALLY CONDONED IN  
SINGAPORE. HOWEVER, AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT  
DATED FEBRUARY 1976 CITES ALLEGATIONS THAT INTERNAL  
SECURITY DETAINEES ARE SUBJECTED TO INTENSIVE QUESTIONING  
IN COLD AIR-CONDITIONED CELLS AND FORCED TO DO STRENUOUS  
EXERCISES RESULTING IN STRAIN AND FATIGUE.

B. CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENT: TO THE  
BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THESE FORMS OF PUNISHMENT ARE  
ABSENT (UNLESS ONE WISHES TO SO DEFINE CANING, WHICH WAS

INTRODUCED BY THE BRITISH AND IS STILL EMPLOYED AS A PUNISHMENT FOR CERTAIN CRIMES). AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS ALSO URGED THAT STEPS BE TAKEN TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY IN SINGAPORE.

C. ARBITRARY ARREST OR IMPRISONMENT: THE GOVERNMENT MAKES RECURRING USE OF DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL IN SECURITY AND SOME CRIMINAL CASES UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT AND CRIMINAL DETENTION LAW.  
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THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT IS A PREVENTIVE DETENTION STATUTE INHERITED FROM THE BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION. ITS USE IS JUSTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE IN CONNECTION WITH THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY (MCP) WHICH IS ACTIVE BOTH IN MALAYSIA AND IN SINGAPORE. THE MCP MAINTAINS AN OPERATIONAL CAPACITY IN SINGAPORE WHERE IT RECRUITS CADRE FOR ITS ARMED INSURGENCY IN MALAYSIA. IN THE APPLICATION OF THE ISA, HOWEVER, THE DEFINITION OF A "SECURITY CASE" HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO INCLUDE AT TIMES A) THOSE WHO HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH COMMUNISM AND SOME ELEMENTS OF THE RADICAL LEFT ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY THEMSELVES SUPPORTERS OF VIOLENT REVOLUTION, B) THOSE WHO PORTRAY SINGAPORE AS A STATE IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES ARE CURTAILED OR THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT AS UNDEMOCRATIC, TOTALITARIAN, AUTOCRATIC AND "OPPRESSIVE", AND C) THOSE WHOSE REPORTING IS CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE TO BE SLANTED AND THEREFORE CAPABLE OF BEING EXPLOITED BY COMMUNISTS.

AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT OF 1975-76 STATES "THE DETAINEES ARE ALLEGED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO BE MEMBERS OR SYMPATHIZERS OF THE ILLEGAL MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY (MCP) OR THE MCP SATELLITE ORGANIZATIONS. THEY ARE HELD WITHOUT TRIAL UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SINGAPORE'S INTERNAL SECURITY ACT. THE DETAINEES INCLUDE A NUMBER OF PROMINENT OPPOSITION POLITICIANS, PARTICULARLY MEMBERS OF THE BARISAN SOSIALIS (SOCIALIST FRONT) PARTY, JOURNALISTS, TRADE UNIONISTS, AND STUDENTS."

THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT PERMITS THE ISSUANCE OF A TWO-YEAR RENEWABLE DETENTION ORDER WHICH IS SUBJECT TO AUTOMATIC REVIEW AT 12-MONTH INTERVALS. PRIME MINISTER  
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LEE HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE 12 LONG-TERM PERSONS CURRENTLY DETAINED HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO ABJURE EITHER FORCE TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT OR SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA.

PERHAPS 200 PERSONS, APPROXIMATELY 70 OF WHOM ARE BELIEVED TO BE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, ARE DETAINED UNDER THE CRIMINAL LAW (TEMPORARY PROVISIONS) ACT, A LAW DESIGNED FOR AND USED MAINLY AGAINST MEMBERS OF SECRET SOCIETIES AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. A WRITTEN ORDER FOR TEMPORARY DETENTION FOR ONE YEAR MAY BE ISSUED BY THE HOME MINISTER. EACH ORDER MUST BE REVIEWED WITHIN 25 DAYS BY AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE WHICH IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT.

D. DENIAL OF FAIR PUBLIC TRIAL: THE SINGAPOREAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM OPERATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BASIC TENETS, PRACTICES, AND PRECEDENTS OF BRITISH JURISPRUDENCE. THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL IS GENERALLY OBSERVED, EXCEPT FOR PERSONS DETAINED UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT AND THE CRIMINAL (DETENTION) LAW.

E. INVASION OF THE HOME: FREEDOM FROM INVASION OF THE HOME IS OBSERVED EXCEPT FOR PERSONS ARRESTED OR DETAINED UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT AND CRIMINAL (DETENTION) LAW. IN OTHER CASES, THE SINGAPORE AUTHORITIES MUST OBTAIN A SEARCH WARRANT BEFORE ENTERING AND SEARCHING A DWELLING PLACE.

## 2. RESPECT FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES

SINGAPORE IS A REPUBLIC WITH A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT ORGANIZED ALONG BRITISH LINES. THE GOVERNMENT IS CONTROLLED BY THE PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW. THERE ARE NO OPPOSITION MEMBERS IN THE UNICAMERAL PARLIAMENT WHICH CONSISTS OF 69 CONFIDENTIAL

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MEMBERS ELECTED TO MAXIMUM FIVE-YEAR TERMS ON THE BASIS OF CUMPULSORY UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE.

A(1). FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, RELIGION AND ASSEMBLY: SINGAPORE, ALTHOUGH PREPONDERANTLY CHINESE IS A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY. THERE IS NO DOCUMENTED DISCRIMINATION AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION IS NOT AN ISSUE. HOWEVER, FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND ASSEMBLY ARE CURTAILED IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT AREAS. FIRST, LIKE NEIGHBORING MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE FORBIDS ACTIVITIES OR PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHICH MIGHT AROUSE COMMUNAL TENSIONS BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY FRICTION BETWEEN THE DOMINANT CHINESE AND THE MALAY MINORITY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS INVOKED THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT TO ARREST AND DETAIN TWO PERSONS ACCUSED OF AROUSING COMMUNAL TENSIONS. COMMUNIST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ARE PROSCRIBED. THE

GOVERNMENT THUS PROMPTLY DETAINS SUSPECTED COMMUNIST ACTIVISTS UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT. LASTLY THE

DEFINITION OF "SECURITY CASES" IS SUFFICIENTLY BROAD THAT IT HAS THE EFFECT OF STIFFLING DISSENT.

A(2). STATUS OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS: SINGAPORE HAS AROUND 210,000 WORKERS ORGANIZED INTO TRADE UNIONS. AROUND 200,000 OF THESE BELONG TO THE NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS WHICH IS INFORMALLY BUT CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE RULING PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY (PAP). SEVERAL OF THE TOP LEADERS OF THE NTUC ARE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. THE NTUC IS A MEMBER OF THE ICFTU (INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS) AND IT ENJOYS CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO.

B. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITHIN SINGAPORE, FOREIGN  
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TRAVEL AND EMIGRATION POLICIES: TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, FOREIGN TRAVEL, AND EMIGRATION ARE NOT CONSTRAINED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE.

C. FREEDOM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS:  
ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL THAT SINGAPORE'S INTERNAL SECURITY LEGISLATION HAS BEEN APPLIED TO REPRESS LEGITIMATE POLITICAL DISSENT. IN SUPPORT OF THAT POSITION, IT NOTES THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE HAS FROM TIME TO TIME DETAINED JOURNALISTS FOR ALLEGEDLY VIOLATING SINGAPORE'S SECURITY IN ARTICLES. FURTHER, SEVERAL CIVIL LAWSUITS FOR LIBEL HAVE BEEN BROUGHT BY PRIME MINISTER LEE AGAINST HIS ERSTWHILE POLITICAL OPPOSITIONS FOLLOWING THE DECEMBER 1976 ELECTIONS. AFTER HEARING TAPE RECORDINGS OF PUBLIC CHARGES AGAINST THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS, THE COURTS HAVE DECIDED THAT THESE SUITS HAVE MERIT.

3. GOVERNMENT POLICIES RELATING TO THE FULFILLMENT OF BASIC NEEDS FOR FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

A. SINGAPORE'S RECORD IN FULFILLING THE BASIC NEEDS OF ITS PEOPLE IS REMARKABLE BY ANY YARDSTICK AND HAS RECEIVED GLOBAL ACCLAIM. THE GOVERNMENT HAS AN IMAGE OF RIGID HONESTY AND HAS ENSHRINED THE WORK ETHIC FOR ITSELF AND ITS CITIZENS (OVER HALF OF WHOM ARE HOUSED IN WELL-DESIGNED APARTMENTS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS BUILT LARGELY OVER THE PAST DECADE). THE STANDARD OF LIVING HAS RISEN STEADILY AND HAS BECOME THE SECOND HIGHEST IN ASIA, AFTER JAPAN. THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO ILLITERACY AND BOTH MEDICAL CARE AND EDUCATION THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY

LEVEL ARE OF HIGH QUALITY. EVEN DURING THE RECESSIONARY PERIOD EARLIER IN THE DECADE, SINGAPORE MAINTAINED A STEADY AND IMPRESSIVE NET ECONOMIC GROWTH. SINGAPORE CURRENTLY HAS AN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF SLIGHTLY LESS THAN

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FOUR PERCENT.

DESPITE SINGAPORE'S ADVANCED WELFARE MEASURES, THE ECONOMY IS ESSENTIALLY FREE ENTERPRISE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WEALTHY SINGAPOREANS, BUT THE GROSS DISPARITY THAT ONE OFTEN ENCOUNTERS ELSEWHERE IN ASIA IS NOT FOUND IN SINGAPORE. THE SPREAD BETWEEN TOP AND BOTTOM INCOME LEVELS IS PROBABLY SOMEWHAT LESS THAN IN THE U.S. IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS, ITS OVERALL RECORD OF PROVIDING FOR THE MATERIAL WELL-BEING OF ITS CITIZENS IS AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

B. THE CIVIL SERVICE IS EFFICIENT AND HONEST, AND ITS LEADERSHIP FREE FROM ANY HINT OF CORRUPTION.

4. GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, BUT ASSERTS THAT IT IS A FULLY CONSISTENT AND JUSTIFIABLE ONE. IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THE SINGAPOREAN LEADERSHIP IS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THE COUNTRY'S UNIQUE VULNERABILITY TO OUTSIDE FORCES AND PRESSURES. SINGAPORE IS A SMALL, HEAVILY POPULATED ISLAND WITH NO HINTERLAND, A TOTAL OF 230 SQUARE MILES AND NO NATURAL DEFENSES. TO BE PROVEN WRONG CAN BE MANAGED -- BUT IN THE SINGAPORE VIEW, TO ACT IN SLACK FASHION IN A SECURITY MATTER EVEN ONCE MAY BE FATAL.

5. WILLINGNESS AND PAST RECORD OF THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING INDEPENDENT, OUTSIDE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS  
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IN GENERAL, SINGAPORE TAKES A DIM VIEW OF FOREIGN CRITICS SUCH AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, FREEDOM HOUSE, OR, LAST YEAR, THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW WITHDREW THE PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY FROM THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WHEN IT CRITICIZED SINGAPORE'S USE OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT. FREEDOM HOUSE CHARACTERIZES SINGAPORE AS PARTLY FREE.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE HAS GENERALLY NOT TAKEN NOTE OF ITS REPORTS.  
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